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Trump's USDA to scatter half its Washington staff to field offices. Critics see a ploy to cut jobs

By **JOHN O'CONNOR and SARAH RAZA**

Associated Press

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (AP) — The U.S. Department of Agriculture will move thousands of employees out of the nation's capital in a reorganization the agency says will put them closer to customers while saving money, Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins said Thursday.

Around 2,600 workers more than half the Washington, D.C. workforce will be moved to five hubs stretching from North Carolina to Utah, Rollins said. The union representing federal workers immediately criticized the plan as a ploy to cut federal jobs, pointing out that some 95% of the department's employees already work outside Washington.

The move is part of President Donald Trump's effort to make the federal government slimmer and more efficient, which received a Supreme Court boost this month.

"American agriculture feeds, clothes, and fuels this nation and the world, and it is long past time the department better serve the great and patriotic farmers, ranchers, and pro-



The U.S. Department of Agriculture seal is seen on a podium during a news conference in Washington, July 8, 2025.

Associated Press

ducers we are mandated to support," Rollins said in a statement.

The goal is to re-size the department so that costs don't outstrip available finances, as well as eliminate layers of management and consolidate redundant functions, the statement said. The department expects the plan to take several months. It follows a workforce reduc-

tion of more than 15,000 department-wide through voluntary retirements earlier this year.

Sen. Amy Klobuchar, a Minnesota Democrat and ranking member of the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee, demanded that department officials appear before the Senate to explain their thinking behind the "half-baked proposal."

"I have serious doubts that the administration adequately considered the impact of this move on research and on services for farmers and rural Americans," Klobuchar said in a statement.

Chad Hart, a professor of agricultural economics at Iowa State University, said the agricultural community is concerned about a "bumpy transition" reminis-

cent of similar action during Trump's first term, when relocated Agriculture offices needed months to get up and running again.

Although it's important to be closer to farmers and ranchers, he said, relocating those Agriculture employees also risks losing connection to Congress.

"You want that balance," Hart said, to ensure effective farm policy.

Everett Kelley, national president of the American Federation of Government Employees, the labor union representing federal workers, agreed. He said staff in Washington ensure the agency has a "seat at the table" when lawmakers and the White House make decisions that affect farmers nationwide.

"I'm concerned this reorganization is just the latest attempt to eliminate USDA workers and minimize their critical work," Kelley said.

Alex Craven, forest campaign manager for the Sierra Club, argued that the more the agency is cut, the easier it will be for the administration to suggest it can no longer do effective work and that parts of it, such as the Forest Service, need to be privatized. □

The Environmental Protection Agency wants to bring back the weed killer dicamba

By **MELINA WALLING**

Associated Press

The Environmental Protec-

tion Agency has proposed allowing the weed killer dicamba for genetically



A farmer shows soybean plants damaged by dicamba in Marvell, Ark., July 11, 2017.

Associated Press

engineered soybeans and cotton, two crops that are grown extensively in the United States.

This week's recommendation comes after the first Trump administration made the same move, only to have courts block it in 2020 and 2024. This is the first year since 2016 that dicamba has not been allowed to be used on crops, according to Nathan Donley, the environmental health science director at the Center for Biological Diversity, a national conservation nonprofit.

Environmental groups say they will once again go to court to try to block it.

"This is an unfortunate roller coaster ride that the country has been in for about 10 years now, and it's just incredibly sad to see our Environmental Protection Agency being hijacked by this administration and facilitating decisions that are objectively going to make our environment less healthy," Donley said.

The EPA said via email that it "will ensure that farmers have the tools they need to protect crops and provide a healthy and affordable food supply for our country" and the agency is "confident these products won't cause issues for human health or the environ-

ment."

The EPA added that the proposal will be open for public comment for 30 days and included a list of proposed guidelines on the use of the three dicamba-containing products in question.

Dicamba is a common weed killer and has been used for over 50 years in the U.S., but it has become more widespread on farms in the past decade, according to data from the EPA and the U.S. Geological Survey.

Researchers have been working to better understand the health risks it might pose to humans. □

Trump's order to block 'woke' AI in government encourages tech giants to censor their chatbots

By MATT O'BRIEN
AP Technology Writer

Tech companies looking to sell their artificial intelligence technology to the federal government must now contend with a new regulatory hurdle: prove their chatbots aren't "woke."

President Donald Trump's sweeping new plan to counter China in achieving "global dominance" in AI promises to cut regulations and cement American values into the AI tools increasingly used at work and home.

But one of Trump's three AI executive orders signed Wednesday the one "preventing woke AI in the federal government" also mimics China's state-driven approach to mold the behavior of AI systems to fit its ruling party's core values.

Several leading providers of the AI language models targeted by the order products like Google's Gemini and Microsoft's Copilot have so far been silent on Trump's anti-woke directive, which still faces a study period before it gets into official procurement rules.

While the tech industry has largely welcomed Trump's broader AI plans, the anti-woke order forces the industry to leap into a culture war battle or try their best to quietly avoid it.

"It will have massive influence in the industry right now," especially as tech companies "are already capitulating" to other Trump administration directives, said civil rights advocate Alejandra Montoya-Boyer, senior director of The Leadership Conference's Center for Civil Rights and Technology.

The move also pushes the tech industry to abandon years of work to combat the pervasive forms of racial and gender bias that studies and real-world examples have shown to be baked into AI systems.

"First off, there's no such thing as woke AI," she said. "There's AI technology that discriminates and then there's AI technology that actually works for all people." Molding the behaviors of AI large language models is challenging because



President Donald Trump holds a signed executive order after speaking during an AI summit at the Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium, Wednesday, July 23, 2025, in Washington.

Associated Press

of the way they're built. They've been trained on most of what's on the internet, reflecting the biases of all the people who've posted commentary, edited a Wikipedia entry or shared images online.

"This will be extremely difficult for tech companies to comply with," said former Biden official Jim Secreto, who was deputy chief of staff to U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo, an architect of many of Biden's AI industry initiatives. "Large language models reflect the data they're trained on, including all the contradictions and biases in human language." Tech workers also have a say in how they're designed, from the global workforce of annotators who check their responses to the Silicon Valley engineers who craft the instructions for how they interact with people.

Trump's order targets those "top-down" efforts at tech companies to incorporate what it calls the "destructive" ideology of diversity, equity and inclusion into AI models, including "concepts like critical race theory, transgenderism, unconscious bias, intersectionality, and systemic racism."

For Secreto, the order resembles China's playbook in "using the power of the state to stamp out what it sees as disfavored viewpoints."

The method is different, with China relying on direct regulation through its Cyberspace Administration, which audits AI models, approves them before they are deployed and requires them to filter out banned content such as the bloody Tiananmen Square crackdown on pro-democracy protests in 1989. Trump's order doesn't call for any such filters, relying on tech companies to instead show that their technology is ideologically neutral by disclosing some of the internal policies that guide the chatbots.

"The Trump administration is taking a softer but still coercive route by using federal contracts as leverage," Secreto said. "That creates strong pressure for companies to self-censor in order to stay in the government's good graces and keep the money flowing."

The order's call for "truth-seeking" AI echoes the language of the president's one-time ally and adviser Elon Musk, who frequently uses that phrase as the mission for the Grok chatbot made by his company xAI. But whether Grok or its rivals will be favored under the new policy remains to be seen.

Despite a "rhetorically pointed" introduction laying out the Trump administration's problems with DEI, the ac-

tual language of the order's directives shouldn't be hard for tech companies to comply with, said Neil Chilson, a Republican former chief technologist for the Federal Trade Commission.

"It doesn't even prohibit an ideological agenda," just that any intentional methods to guide the model be disclosed, said Chilson, who is now head of AI policy at the nonprofit Abundance Institute. "Which is pretty light touch, frankly."

Chilson disputes comparisons to China's cruder modes of AI censorship.

"There is nothing in this order that says that companies have to produce or cannot produce certain types of output," he said. "It says developers shall not intentionally encode partisan or ideological judgments. That's the exact opposite of the Chinese requirement."

So far, tech companies that have praised Trump's broader AI plans haven't said much about the order.

OpenAI on Thursday said it is awaiting more detailed guidance but believes its work to make ChatGPT objective already makes the technology consistent with what the order requires.

Microsoft, a major supplier of email, cloud computing and other online services to the federal government, declined to comment Thursday.

Musk's xAI, through spokesperson Katie Miller, a former Trump official, pointed to a company comment praising Trump's AI announcements as a "positive step" but didn't respond to a follow-up question about how Grok would be affected.

Anthropic, Google, Meta, and Palantir didn't immediately respond to emailed requests for comment Thursday.

AI tools are already widely used in the federal government, including AI platforms such as ChatGPT and Google Gemini for internal agency support to summarize the key points of a lengthy report.

The ideas behind the order have bubbled up for more than a year on the podcasts and social media feeds of Trump's top AI adviser David Sacks and other influential Silicon Valley venture capitalists, many of whom endorsed Trump's presidential campaign last year. Much of their ire centered on Google's February 2024 release of an AI image-generating tool that produced historically inaccurate images before the tech giant took down and fixed the product.

Google later explained that the errors — including one user's request for American Founding Fathers that generated portraits of Black, Asian and Native American men — was the result of an overcompensation for technology that, left to its own devices, was prone to favoring lighter-skinned people because of pervasive bias in the systems. Trump allies alleged that Google engineers were hard-coding their own social agenda into the product, and made it a priority to do something about it.

"It's 100% intentional," said prominent venture capitalist and Trump adviser Marc Andreessen on a podcast in December. "That's how you get Black George Washington at Google. There's override in the system that basically says, literally, 'Everybody has to be Black.' Boom. There's squads, large sets of people, at these companies who determine these policies and write them down and encode them into these systems." □

Air Force command pauses M18 pistol use after airman's death at Wyoming base

By **KATHY McCORMACK and MEAD GRUVER**
Associated Press

The U.S. Air Force Global Strike Command has paused the use of a handgun following the death of a Security Forces airman at a base in Wyoming.

The use of the M18 pistol, a variant of another gun that has been the target of lawsuits over unintentional discharge allegations, was paused Monday "until further notice" following the "tragic incident" Sunday at F.E. Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne, the command said in a statement. Security Forces airmen at all command bases "will conduct 100% inspections of the M18 handguns to identify any immediate safety concerns," it said.

The airman killed was Brayden Lovan, 21, of the 90th Security Forces Squadron, 90th Missile Wing at the base, where he began his first active-duty assignment in November 2023, base officials said Thursday.

Details of what happened are not being released pending an investigation, said Lt. Raegan Lockhart, public affairs officer for the 90th Missile Wing. How long the investigation might take isn't known, Lockhart added.

"We mourn the loss of a valued defender, teammate and friend. Our fo-



This May 24, 2108, file photo shows the entrance to F.E. Warren Air Force Base in Cheyenne, Wyo. **Associated Press**

cus remains on supporting the family and team during this incredibly difficult time," Col. Jeremy Shepard, 90th Security Forces Group commander, said in a statement.

The gun is made by New Hampshire-based manufacturer Sig Sauer, which is defending itself against multiple lawsuits alleging that its popular related gun, the P320 pistol, can go off without the trigger being pulled. Sig Sauer denies the claims, saying the P320 is safe and the problem is user error. It has prevailed in some cases.

"Our hearts are with the

service members and families impacted by the recent reported event at the F.E. Warren Air Force Base," Sig Sauer said Wednesday in a statement posted on Facebook.

The P320 was adopted by the U.S. military as M17 and M18 pistols, and the M18 is now the official sidearm of all branches of the U.S. military, Sig Sauer says on its website. In 2019, Sig Sauer announced it had delivered its 100,000th M17 and M18s to the U.S. military.

The pause is so far limited to the Global Strike Command, which includes more than 33,700 airmen

and civilians. The rest of the Air Force and the other armed services have not announced any orders to avoid using the pistols.

The Army values its forces' safety and would continue to "monitor the situation," it said in a statement that did not mention any plan to halt using the firearm.

The Marine Corps also uses the firearm, and said it was "rigorously tested" to Defense Department standards before being chosen for use by the Marines.

"We have not seen any evidence that indicates design or manufacturing issues are present," the

Marine Corps said in an emailed statement.

The Air Force Office of Special Investigations is leading an effort, in collaboration with the Air Force Security Forces Center and Headquarters Air Force Security Forces, "to conduct a thorough review of the M18 and develop appropriate corrective measures." Sig Sauer said it has offered to assist.

The P320 was introduced in 2014. Sig Sauer offered a "voluntary upgrade" in 2017 to reduce the weight of the trigger, among other features. Lawyers for people who have sued the gunmaker, many of them law enforcement officers, say the upgrade did not stop unintentional discharges.

Earlier this year, Sig Sauer appealed a ban of the P320, M17 and M18 pistols by the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission, arguing that it appears to be based on inaccurate and incomplete information. The commission banned the weapons after a recruit said his P320 discharged while he was drawing it, even though his finger was not on the trigger.

And just this month, Sig Sauer announced that the Michigan State Police is adopting the M18 as its primary sidearm. □



This aerial image taken from video provided by WEWS shows police working at the scene of shooting after police officers were wounded and a man was killed in an exchange of gunfire early Wednesday afternoon, July 23, 2025, in an industrial area of Lorain, Ohio.

Associated Press

By **JOHN SEEWER and MARK SCOLFORO**

Associated Press

LORAIN, Ohio (AP) — A man with a high-powered rifle and a vehicle filled with weapons ambushed two Ohio po-

lice officers eating lunch in their car on a remote street, wounding both along with another officer who heard their call for help, authorities said Thursday. An autopsy on the shooter, 28-year-old

Man who shot 3 Ohio officers in ambush was equipped with multiple weapons, police say

Michael Joseph Parker of Lorain, showed he was killed Wednesday afternoon by multiple gunshot wounds fired by police officers, said the Loraine County coroner, Dr. Frank Miller.

Parker's bullet wounds "are not self-inflicted," Miller said in phone interview after the Thursday autopsy. "It's during the gunbattle." He said toxicology test results will take a few weeks.

Two of the officers suffered multiple gunshot wounds and were in critical condition after being flown to a trauma center, according to a

statement issued by the Ohio Fraternal Order of Police. The other officer was shot in the hand, according to Lorain's acting police chief.

It's not clear why the gunman opened fire on the officers. Authorities say they believe Parker acted alone when he used the rifle to shoot the officers — Phillip Wagner, 35; Peter Gale, 51; and Brent Payne, 47.

Just before the ambush, Wagner and Gale parked to eat pizza on a dead-end street in a remote, undeveloped area of Lorain that overlooks a river and a steel

mill. Payne was shot after responding to their call, acting Police Chief Michael Failing said. "Officers returned fire during the exchange, which ultimately resulted in Parker sustaining a fatal injury," according to statement from police in nearby Elyria who are handling the investigation. Investigators found multiple rifles, handguns and loaded magazines in and around Parker's vehicle, along with a significant amount of improvised explosive materials that were removed and safely detonated, Elyria police said. □

Video showing migrant worker moved by forklift prompts action from South Korea's president

By HYUNG-JIN KIM

Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)

— South Korea's president ordered officials to find ways to prevent the mistreatment of migrant workers after a video showing a Sri Lankan worker being moved by a forklift while tied up at a South Korean factory sparked public outrage.

"After watching the video, I couldn't believe my eyes," President Lee Jae Myung wrote Thursday in a Facebook post. "That was an intolerable violation and clear human rights infringement of a minority person." Lee also condemned the treatment of the worker during a Cabinet Council meeting and expressed concerns about South Korea's international image. He ordered government ministries to investigate the working conditions of migrant workers and other minorities in South Korea and find realistic steps to end any abuse.

Lee and other officials didn't say the Sri Lankan worker was treated that way because he is a migrant worker. But the Labor Ministry said it views the in-



South Korean President Lee Jae Myung attends a Cabinet Council meeting at the presidential office in South Korea, Thursday, July 24, 2025.

Associated Press

cident as evidence that migrant workers in South Korea suffer poor treatment at some worksites, a view held by experts and activists.

South Korean human rights activists on Wednesday released the video filmed at a brick factory in the southwestern city of Naju

in late February. They said it was filmed and provided by a fellow Sri Lankan worker. The video was being shared among rights groups before being made public. The video shows a forklift driver, who has been identified as South Korean, lifting another worker who is bound with plastic wrap

and tied to bricks. The driver moves him around the factory yard in the vehicle while the sound of laughter from another person can be heard.

The 31-year-old worker suffered the mistreatment for about five minutes as a punishment imposed by the South Korean forklift

driver, who wasn't happy with his brick wrapping skills, according to Mun Gil Ju, one of the local activists involved in the video's release.

The worker told reporters in a televised interview broadcast Thursday that he suffered stress and mental anguish as a result of the incident. The YTN television network, which broadcast the interview, blurred his face and didn't provide his name.

YTN also showed the unidentified head of the factory saying "we absolutely feel sorry for" the incident. Naju city officials said the factory manager told them he had been informed the event was organized as a prank. But Mun said "binding a person with plastic wrap" cannot be downplayed as a prank.

About 20 activists rallied in front of Naju's city hall on Thursday, demanding that authorities punish those responsible. In an editorial Friday, the local Kukmin Ilbo newspaper called the treatment of the man "a shameful" incident indicative of how migrant workers are treated in South Korea. □

French President Macron says France will recognize Palestine as a state

PARIS (AP) — French President Emmanuel Macron announced Thursday that France will recognize Palestine as a state, amid snowballing global anger over people starving in Gaza.

Macron said in a post on X that he will formalize the decision at the United Nations General Assembly in September. "The urgent thing today is that the war in Gaza stops and the civilian population is saved." The French president offered support for Israel after the Oct. 7, 2023 Hamas attacks and frequently speaks out against antisemitism, but he has grown increasingly frustrated about Israel's war in

Gaza, especially in recent months.

"Given its historic commitment to a just and sustainable peace in the Middle East, I have decided that France will recognize the state of Palestine," Macron posted. "Peace is possible."

He also posted a letter he sent to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas about the decision.

France is the biggest and most powerful European country to recognize Palestine.

More than 140 countries recognize a Palestinian state, including more than a dozen in Europe.

France has Europe's largest Jewish population and

the largest Muslim population in western Europe, and fighting in the Middle East often spills over into

protests or other tensions in France.

The Israeli Foreign Ministry had no immediate com-



French President Emmanuel Macron speaks to the army leaders at the Hotel le Brienne, Sunday, July 13, 2025, ahead of the Bastille Day parade in Paris.

Associated Press

ment.

France's foreign minister is co-hosting a conference at the U.N. next week about a two-state solution. Last month, Macron expressed his "determination to recognize the state of Palestine," and he has pushed for a broader movement toward a two-state solution, in parallel with recognition of Israel and its right to defend itself.

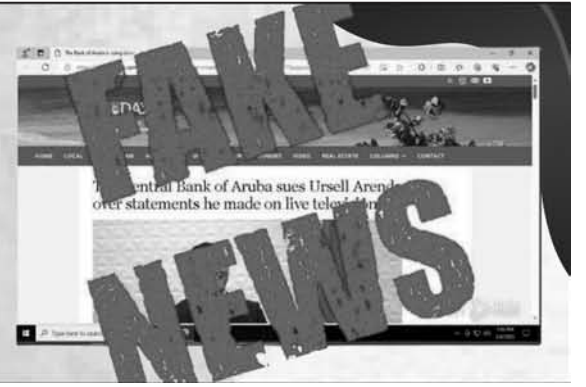
Thursday's announcement came soon after the U.S. cut short Gaza cease-fire talks in Qatar, saying Hamas wasn't showing good faith.

Momentum has been building against Israel in recent days. □

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Taliban tortured and threatened Afghans expelled from Pakistan and Iran, U.N. report says



A Taliban fighter stands on a hill overlooking a camp housing Afghan refugees who have been repatriated from Pakistan, near the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, in Torkham, Afghanistan, May 31, 2025.

Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — The Taliban have tortured and threatened Afghans forcibly returned from Iran and Pakistan because of their identity or personal history, a U.N. report said Thursday. Pakistan and Iran are expelling millions of Afghans who they say are living in their countries illegally. Afghan authorities have urged nationals to return, pledging amnesty for anyone who left after the Taliban seized power in 2021. But rights groups and the U.N. have repeatedly warned that some of those returning are at risk of persecution because of their gender, links to the former Western-backed administration or profession. Thursday's report from the U.N. mission in Afghanistan said some people have ex-

perienced serious human rights violations, while others have gone into hiding or relocated for fear of Taliban reprisal. The violations include torture, ill-treatment, arbitrary arrest, and threats to personal security at the hands of the Taliban, according to the report. A former government official told the U.N. mission that, after his return to Afghanistan in 2023, he was detained and severely tortured with sticks and cables. He was waterboarded and subjected to a mock execution. A non-binary person said they were beaten severely, including with the back of a gun. Volker Türk, the U.N. high commissioner for human rights, said nobody should

be sent back to a country where they faced the risk of persecution on account of their identity or personal history. This was even more pronounced for Afghan women and girls, who were subjected to a range of measures "amounting to persecution based on their gender alone," he added. The Taliban have imposed severe restrictions on Afghan girls and women, cutting off education beyond sixth grade, most employment and access to many public spaces. Responding to the report, Taliban authorities denied mistreating Afghan returnees and rejected allegations of arrest, violence, intimidation or retaliation against people because of their identity or personal history.

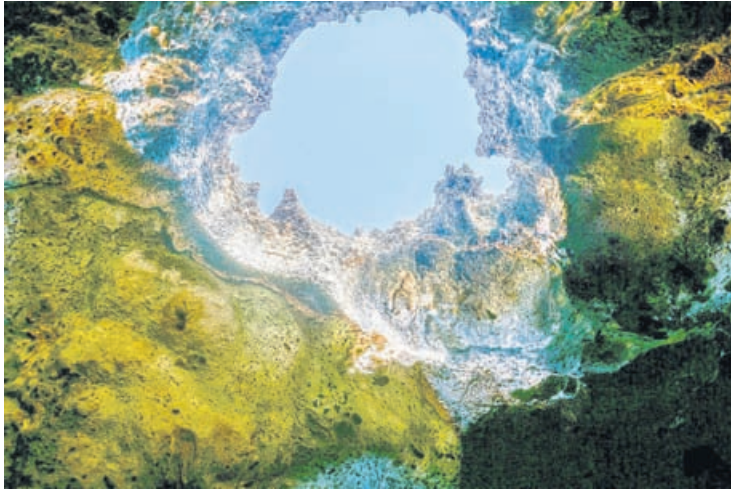
Afghans returning from neighboring countries were provided with facilities related to documentation, transportation, resettlement, and other legal support, they said, while the Interior Ministry provides a "warm welcome." They called on the U.N. mission to prevent forced deportations, adding the United Nations as a whole "should not hesitate" in providing basic needs to refugees, such as food, medicine, shelter and education. Afghans who left their homeland in the millions over the decades are either being pushed out in expulsion campaigns, like those in Iran and Pakistan, or face an uncertain future because of reduced support for refugees.

On Monday, thousands of Afghans in the U.S. lost protection from deportation after a federal appeals court refused to postpone U.S. President Donald Trump administration's decision to end their legal status. Homeland Security officials said in their decision to end the Temporary Protected Status for Afghans that the situation in their home country was getting better. But groups helping Afghans with this status say the country is still extremely dangerous. The Trump administration's January suspension of a refugee program has left thousands of Afghans stranded, particularly in Pakistan, and a travel ban on Afghans has further diminished their hopes of resettlement in the U.S. □

Today is going to be a good day

(Oranjestad)—Here's why: Aruba Today collected some things to do BEYOND the beach. Yes, we know. Aruba, located 15 miles north of Venezuela in the warm waters of the southern Caribbean, is home to beautiful white-sand beaches, 82-degree days, and thus ideal for the perfect beach day. But we are also blessed with some of the warmest people in the world and our island is 19.6 miles long and 6 miles across, with a total area of 70 square miles. Bit more to discover than the white stretch on the coastline we say. Let's mention some of these hidden gems.

Nature Calls



The Arikok National park is worth the ride. We love the hikes that are guided by the park's rangers whose job is to maintain trails and protect natural resources. The flora and fauna are beautiful and the historical sites tell you about the island's indigenous roots. Cruising through the landscape you end up at some of the most stunning beaches like Dos Playa or Daimara Beach. In Total the park consists of 7907 acres protected nature with a richness of animals living in it. The Aruban whiptail lizard (cododo), Aruban cat eye snake (santanero) and endangered rattle snake (cascabel) are just some of them, you can also admire these close in the park's Visitors' Center. For more information, visit the website www.acf.aw

Philip's Animal Garden

To stay with the animals, let's hop to an amazing place. Something different to do, an experience that is to be enjoyed by people of all ages. Welcome to Philip's Animal Garden. We are not talking about a zoo here, this is actually a sanctuary for all types of creatures, from horses to peacocks, kangaroos to turtles, monkeys, goats, and many, many more different species. The place was founded in 2009 and it is the only organization rescuing and rehabilitating exotic animals in Aruba, which has resulted in an amazing collection of these animals. They provide a suitable living environment for all the rescued animals. Up until now the owner, Philip, has built this shelter with his own efforts; building all the cages from scratch, designing all structures and welding them with his own bare hands. His goal is to upgrade the facilities to a world-class animal shelter with veterinary care and round-the-clock staffs. With the input from the Aruban community and visitors they provide the best care for these animals. Please check out their website for more information: www.philip-sanimalgarden.com.

The Lighthouse

No, you would not think of this as a hidden gem. The California Lighthouse is actually one of the most known high-lights in Aruba and many repeated guests most probably took the ride uphill already. But, there is a significant change to this tower. Since September 2016 you can climb the top. In 2015 Stichting Monumentenfonds started the restoration of the California Lighthouse. The project

finished in September 2016 and the Lighthouse is now open for visitors to enjoy the beautiful view from the top. The construction of the California Lighthouse started in 1915. The name 'California' came from a vessel of the West India Company and Pacific Steamship Co. called 'California' that shipwrecked in the area in 1891. Therefore they came up with the idea of building a lighthouse that could indicate the island's eastern tip to ships with its light. www.arubalighthouse.com will give you more information.

Kayak in the Mangroves



Mangel Halto at Savaneta is definitely a place not to miss out on. The beautiful beach with the natural mangroves is simply a beauty, but if you are into a more ac-

tive way to enjoy the nature: take a kayak. While you are doing some workout -as it might get a little windy and rough-, you will see the island from a different perspective. You can even make a stop to do some snorkeling at the reef. Its fun, it's healthy and for sure something else. There are several companies that offer kayak tours, we had good experience with The Shack Kayak Tours Aruba, find them on Facebook.

Go for a shopping spree in the city center

Need a new bathing suit? Head to the city center of Oranjestad, where there is countless of different stores—both high end and more affordable—that can offer you the service you deserve! Local shopping stores often offer a more affordable price, and have a variety of clothes, shoes, bathing suites, purses and more. Along the Royal Plaza strip, there are numerous jewelry stores with great quality jewelry. In the Renaissance mall, you can shop high-end luxury brands, like Dolce & Gabbana, Kate Spade, Louis Vuitton and more.

Around the high-rise hotel area near Palm Beach, the Paseo Herencia Mall contain a variety of shopping stores, restaurants, small food stands and even a movie theater! ☐



Ready for a refreshing start? Join ACF's next rough hike

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Dining in? Try making a local favorite How to make "pan bati"

(Oranjestad)—If you're ever up for an Aruban snack, try making another Aruban classic appetizer called Pan Bati. Similar to a pancake both in appearance and cooking, this is a super easy meal that adults and children will both enjoy. Here's how to make it!

Ingredients:

2 cups of all purpose flour
1 cup grams of fine cornmeal (we recommend the Harina PAN brand)
2 tbsp baking powder
1 1/3 cup of milk
1 pinch of salt
2 tbsp of granulated sugar
Oil for cooking

Instructions:

Add all the dry ingredients in a bowl first, and stir until well mixed. Then add the milk and beat until reached a pancake-like consistency. If more moisture is needed, add some water until reached desired consistency.

In a hot pan with oil, pour in enough batter to cover the bottom of the pan. Just like pancakes, flip the pan bati when one side turns golden brown. When your pan bati is ready, place on a plate and cover with a clean kitchen towel.

Traditionally, pan bati is cut in triangle pieces, and is often eaten as a side dish with soup, fried fish or stews. However, it is also casually enjoyed with some butter and cheese on top! ☐

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The Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins and its history



(Oranjestad)—The Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins is one of the most visited places by tourists on the island, as it lies along the northern coast line near the mini pool and on the way to the Natural Bridge. Despite its seemingly plain appearance, this ruin represents one of the most important histories of the island: The Aruban Gold Rush.

Built in 1872 by English company Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd, the gold mill at Bushiribana was constructed in the area where most gold was found by locals. The story of gold on Aruba actually dates back to 1725, when a first exploration for gold on the island was commissioned by the Dutch West India Company. Under the leadership of Mr. Paulus Printz, a three-year search was conducted on Aruba, to no avail. Though they found some gold, it was enough to motivate a further search, and the assignment was discontinued by Printz himself.

It wasn't until 100 years later, in 1824, when a young boy found a lump of gold

while out herding his father's sheep. His father took it to a local merchant who then sold the lump for \$70. Unbeknownst to the boy and his father, they quite literally struck gold, and as word got out, a gold fever spread among the locals who started searching for more gold. About 25 pounds worth was found.

At the same time, the Aruban government took immediate actions, and informed Curacao that gold was found. At first, everyone could look for gold, as long as they sold it to the government. However, after some time, the government decided to implement stricter rules and banned local search parties.

Over the years, concession-holding had seen different companies from around the world, all of which used primitive methods to dig and carve out gold from the rocks. Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd. was no different, but used a unique method that involved grinding the rocks and letting the dust be blown away by the strong

northeast wind, leaving clumps of gold behind. The next step was melting the gold and letting it attach to quicksilver in order to obtain pure gold. All these processes were done at the Bushiribana Gold Mill.

The gold mill itself had a short life-span: only 10 years in service, but its structure remained relatively solid till this day, and is now a historical remnant. □



Sources: Etnia Nativa & gold-mineranch.com.

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A brief history of the California Light House

(Oranjestad)—At the furthest western point of the island, there lies the tallest structure on the island: The California Light House. Standing on top of a limestone cliff, this lighthouse oversees the entire island, offering one of few best views of the island and the surrounding sea. It is also one of the few monuments that hold a rich history.

The lighthouse was constructed in between 1914-1916, and its first keeper was a young trained lighthouse keeper from Curacao names Jacob Jacobs. Mr. Frederico Fingal was the last man to have occupied this position until 1962. Though his son, Mr. Romulo Fingal did not continue in his father's footsteps, he does have a special connection to the lighthouse. He sat down with our reporter and shared a bit of its history.

As Mr. Fingal explains, "In 1915, cargo donkeys were hired from Figaroa di Noord to help build the Lighthouse at Westpunt. The donkeys had to walk along the beach all the way to Westpunt carrying the cargo, poles, cement, and all these things. At that time, it was a difficult task until Aruba got its first truck. These things reflect how people could have accomplished this tremendous job with so little." Mr. Fingal said, "At that time, it wasn't a place for people to work. It was very challenging because it was full of goats and donkeys, and it was very isolated. There were no hotels or roads to get there. There was only a donkey trail. Those were the only means of transportation."

Mr. Fingal continues, "In 1939, I was born in the lighthouse, and my father was the last lighthouse keeper until he retired in 1962. After that, they removed the power cables all the way to the top. According to the story, we couldn't have the light ourselves because they dismantled it, and after many years, I heard that it is in a train museum in San Nicolas, where we found this very special lens that, when the light shines through it, it reaches 30 kilometers out to sea." Mr. Fingal told our reporter.



The lighthouse has a long and very interesting history. The reason why the lighthouse was built, according to Mr. Fingal, dates back to the day when the cargo ship S.S. California sank because of the lack of light. In 1913, Aruba made a request to Curacao to build a Lighthouse at Westpunt, and the governor of Curacao responded to Aruba to come back in 1915 with a well-detailed plan. "During the First World War from 1914 to 1918, they had to wait for the light to be transported to Aruba because it was manufactured in France. At that time, there was no electricity, and the light was very interesting because it rotated with a kerosene lamp that planes used; clean kerosene," Mr. Fingal said.

Mr. Fingal discovered something very interesting about the lighthouse after much

research was documented in his book 'History of the Lighthouse at Westpunt.' He found many details: "I found out that the height of the lighthouse was due to the absence of electricity. There was also the presence of coral. There is a long steel cable from where the light is, and under the light, at the highest point, there is a hanging weight, a sort of pendulum that swings like that, with a weight that measures about 1 meter by 30 centimeters wide, which is a block of solid iron attached to a cable. When you release it upwards, it comes down, and the weight that comes down pulls it up, gradually. And while it comes down, the same weight that is descending causes many small wheels to turn in the opposite direction. The Lighthouse rotates from 6 pm in the evening, when the sun sets, until 6 am in the morning. During the entire night, the light shines on the lantern, it goes down 24 meters, and the Lighthouse is 30 meters high. It is designed not to collapse," Mr. Fingal explains.

Mr. Fingal further explains

that in one night, the lighthouse rotates 4,320 times and consumes one gallon of kerosene for the whole operation. "At that time, the kerosene was supplied from the Lago refinery. Every day it was brought down, and to start the light again, they had to lift the weight up, so our job as children was to crank it and raise the weight back up in the evening when the light stuck, they would take it down again, and the light stayed down. That's how it worked for a very long time," Mr. Fingal explains.

Thanks to the Monument Fund Aruba, which worked hard and is currently in charge of the Lighthouse, Mr. Fingal is very happy with its preservation, along with all the renovations that have taken place. He hopes that the story of the lighthouse will continue to live on for future generations. □



How Aruban beaches came to be!

(Oranjestad)—We've talked about the best beaches to visit on the island before, but have you ever wondered how Aruba got its white, sandy beaches, and why there's a clear difference between the northern and southern shores? Here are some fun facts about the development of Aruban beaches.

How did Aruba get its white,

sandy beaches?

Aruba's beaches have developed over the span of thousands of years. Waves crashing on the rocky formations along our coast line (which consists mainly of coral reefs) have started to wear and tear the reefs over time, resulting in its gradual breakdown. Fish that feed off corals also contribute to this, one small bite at a time. Over

the course of thousands of years, as waves continue to crash and fish continue to eat off the corals, sand starts to accumulate around the area. However, whether the sand stays there is another question to be answered, and this is where we highlight the biggest difference between the northern and southern coast of the island.



The sand that accumulates around a torn coral reef is swept away along with the debris by the ocean stream. However, in areas where it's shallow and the stream is weaker, the sand tends to stick to the bottom faster. This is why the beaches in the south—the areas with weaker stream and shallower ocean floors—has sand that stretches for miles. In contrast, the northern area, where the stream is much stronger and the ocean floor is much deeper, there is no sand present—they were swept away with the current!

Why north deep, but south shallow?

Ah! Good question...and interesting phrasing.

Aruba is a continental island. The island actually forms part of South America, and the space between Aruba and the South American continent is simply referred to as land that runs under the ocean. This is why it gets gradually deeper in the south, whereas the ocean floor in the north runs steeply to the bottom. □

Source: archival document provided by the National Archive of Aruba (ANA).

Lessons from our elders: Plants and fruits for medicinal use

(Oranjestad)—Though western medicine is now widely used for common illnesses and to keep our bodies healthy and happy, it is still very common in every household in Aruba (and around the world) to have staple home remedies that is passed on through generations. Here are some tips that our elders have passed on to us over the years.

Sweet potato

According to our elders,

sweet potato is mostly useful for low blood pressure. People who suffer from low blood pressure were advised to eat sweet potato 2 to 3 times a week. However, if you have high blood pressure, it is best not to eat too much sweet potato, as this raises blood pressure. Sweet potatoes are also great for people who work hard labor jobs, and it's been said to be aid blood circulation in the body, as well as help those with hemorrhoids or diarrhea.



Many of our elders opted to plant sweet potatoes themselves, mostly because of how easy it was to do so. Cut the end of a sweet potato let it sit in shallow water until it starts to sprout. Then you may plant it in the ground. Sweet potatoes need plenty of water to grow, especially in the first week in the ground. It was said that once you start to notice the ground crack underneath the flowers, it is time to harvest. This should happen around month 3.

Pomegranate

Pomegranates are also one of the easier fruits to plant and harvest. Originated from Persia, this plant can grow almost everywhere. In Aruba, there are many homes that have a tiny or big pomegranate tree. You may be wondering what the difference is between a small and big pomegranate tree, for which the answer is based



on harvest time. Tiny trees produce tinier pomegranates that can be harvested early on. Contrarily, big trees produce bigger pomegranates, but they need enough time to fully ripen before harvesting, otherwise you might end up with bitter seeds. Pomegranate trees are also very easy to plant. In essence, if you just throw the seeds on the ground, they could grow into a tree. In terms of medicinal use, pomegranate skins are said to have a few benefits

for our health. According to customs, pomegranate skin tea can help those that suffer from diarrhea. Dried pomegranate skin tea is also good for people who have worms. Pomegranate flowers can be boiled to make a drink and this can be used for irritated gums; just take a swig and let the tea sit in your mouth for a couple minutes. □

Source: Remedi i Kustumber di nos Bieunan (Medicine and Customs of our Elderly) by Dinah Veeris

CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

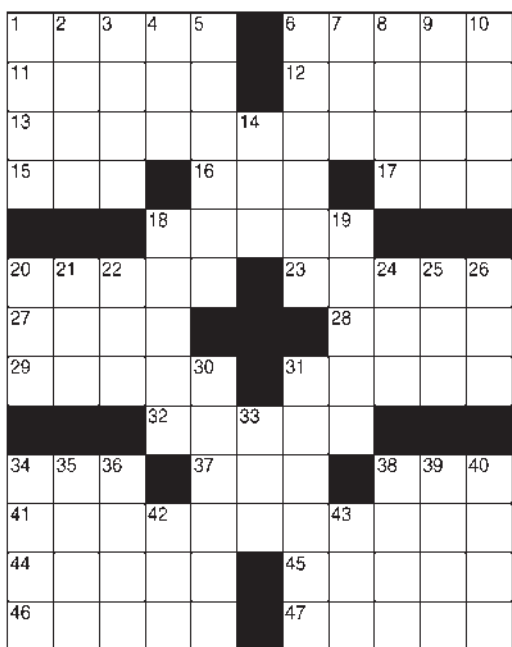
- 1 Out of style
6 Overly eager
11 Cast member
12 Stage comment
13 Stephen King novel
15 Skirt edge
16 Take to court
17 Harden
18 Bank subtraction
20 Allude (to)
23 Some sculptures
27 Region
28 Theater box
29 Market direction
31 Go through a whole season's episodes
32 Recap
34 Cry loudly
37 Rented truck
38 Steaming
41 Stephen King novel
44 Silver bar
45 Knight's weapon
46 Romantic dozen
47 Fencing swords

DOWN

- 1 Hiking route
2 Ibuprofen target
3 Goblet part
4 Lawn material
5 White-board need
6 Accumulate
7 Fire remnant
8 Prejudice
9 Goofing off
10 Skilled
14 Massage
18 College VIPs
19 Dutch bloom



- 20 Lab animal
21 Blunder
22 Lawyer's charge
24 Singer Henley
25 Nest item
26 Spot
30 Soft quilts
31 Sizeable sum
33 Goat sound
34 Commotion
35 Cry of distress
36 Implores
38 Sharpen
39 In the past
40 Golf pegs
42 Buck's mate
43 Ray-gun sound



8-1

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

8-1 CRYPTOQUOTE

PLTLJW HJ WRS ADUNSU
ASWYSSB JLZZSU PBN PLWLZB;
HW HJ WRS ZDIW ASPLWHOLF
ZDBWR H QBDY. — WDKS
IPBJJDB

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STRUMMING, SO LAZY AND HUM-STRUMMING.
— CARL SANDBURG

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			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
THU	17	CARNIVAL CELEBRATION	08.00	17.00	C	1
SUN	20	FREEWINDS - Dept.	****	22.30	E	-
TUE	22	CARNIVAL HORIZON	09.00	23.00	C	1
WED	23	CELEBRITY REFLECTION	07.00	16.00	C	1
		FREEWINDS	06.00	****	E	1
SUN	27	FREEWINDS - Dept.	****	22.30	E	-
WED	30	RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	08.00	23.00	C	1
		FREEWINDS	06.00	****	E	1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic but important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.



Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 8 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.



Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.



Drinking water

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

King Classic Sudoku



Difficulty: ★★★★★

7/25

Answer to previous puzzle

3	4	7	2	5	8	9	6	1
2	9	1	6	7	3	8	4	5
6	8	5	4	1	9	3	7	2
4	5	3	8	2	7	6	1	9
7	2	8	9	6	1	5	3	4
9	1	6	5	3	4	2	8	7
1	6	9	7	8	2	4	5	3
5	7	4	3	9	6	1	2	8
8	3	2	1	4	5	7	9	6

Difficulty: ★★★

7/24

Trump offers support to Musk's car company in a surprising post as Tesla stock plunges



People visit a booth of Tesla during the 3rd China International Supply Chain Expo at the China International Exhibition Center, in Beijing, China, Friday, July 18, 2025.

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump took to social media Thursday morning to support Elon Musk's car company, a startling development given their bitter public feud.

"I want Elon, and all businesses within our Country, to THRIVE," Trump wrote on Truth Social.

The post wasn't enough to help Tesla's stock, which fell sharply after the company reported another quarter of lackluster financial results and Musk warned of some potentially "rough quarters" into next year. The stock fell 8.2% and is now down more than 24% so far this year.

Late Wednesday, Tesla said revenue fell 12% and profit dropped 16% in the April-June quarter. Many prospective buyers have been turned off by Musk's foray into right-wing politics, and the competition

has ramped up in key markets such as Europe and China. Investors have been unnerved by Musk's social media spat with the president because Trump has threatened to retaliate by ending government contracts and breaks for Musk's various businesses, including Tesla.

But Trump struck a starkly different tone Thursday morning.

"Everyone is stating that I will destroy Elon's companies by taking away some, if not all, of the large scale subsidies he receives from the U.S. Government. This is not so!" Trump wrote. "The better they do, the better the USA does, and that's good for all of us."

After Trump's massive budget bill passed earlier this month, Tesla faces the loss of the \$7,500 EV tax credit and stands to make much less money from selling reg-

ulatory credits to other automakers. Trump's tariffs on countries including China and Mexico will also cost Tesla hundreds of millions of dollars, the company said on its earnings call.

Musk has blasted the budget bill on his own social media platform X for adding to U.S. debt at a time when it is already too large. The Tesla CEO has called the budget pushed by the president a "disgusting abomination" and has threatened to form a new political party.

On Wednesday's call, Musk said the electric vehicle maker will face "a few rough quarters" as it moves into a future focused less on selling cars and more on offering people rides in self-driving cars. He also talked up the company's business making humanoid robotics. But he acknowledged those businesses are a ways off from contributing to Tesla's bottom line. □

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GOLD SEASON

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3 Bed Ocean View: \$30,000

Marriott Aruba Ocean Club

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1 Bed Ocean View: \$17,500

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Hulk Hogan, icon in professional wrestling, dies at age 71

By **CURT ANDERSON and ED WHITE**

Associated Press
CLEARWATER, Fla. (AP)

— Hulk Hogan, a mustachioed, headscarf-wearing icon in professional wrestling who turned the sport into a massive business and cultural touchstone, died Thursday at 71, Florida police said.

Hogan was pronounced dead at a hospital after authorities in Clearwater responded to a morning call about a cardiac arrest, police said.

"There were no signs of foul play or suspicious activity," Maj. Nate Burnside told reporters.

Hogan, whose real name was Terry Bollea, was perhaps the biggest star in WWE's long history. He was the main draw for the first WrestleMania in 1985 and was a fixture for years, facing everyone from Andre The Giant and Randy Savage to The Rock and even company chairman Vince McMahon.

He won at least six WWE championships and was inducted into the WWE Hall of Fame in 2005.

"One of pop culture's most recognizable figures, Hogan helped WWE achieve global recognition in the 1980s. WWE extends its condolences to Hogan's family, friends, and fans," WWE said.

"Hulkamania," as the energy he created was called, started running wild in the mid-1980s and pushed pro-



Hulk Hogan fires up the crowd between matches at WrestleMania 21 at the Staples Center in Los Angeles, April 3, 2005.

Associated Press

fessional wrestling into the mainstream. He was a flag-waving American hero with the horseshoe mustache, red and yellow gear and massive arms he called his "24-inch pythons."

Hogan was also a celebrity outside the wrestling world, appearing in numerous movies and television shows, including a reality show about his life on VH1, "Hogan Knows Best."

In recent years, Hogan added his celebrity to politics. At the 2024 Republican National Convention, he merged classic WWE maneuvers with then-candidate Donald Trump's

rhetoric to passionately endorse him for president.

"Let Trumpamania run wild brother! Let Trumpamania rule again! Let Trumpamania make America great again!" Hogan shouted into the raucous crowd.

He ripped off a T-shirt emblazoned with a picture of himself on a motorcycle to reveal a bright red Trump-Vance campaign shirt underneath.

Trump stood to applaud the move.

Hogan lately began to invest in alternatives to theatrical, professional wrestling, announcing plans in April to serve as the first

commissioner for the Real American Freestyle organization, which describes itself as "the first unscripted pro wrestling" leagues in the world. The first event is Aug. 30 at Cleveland State University.

"The idea was so exciting that I get a chance to be involved with all these young people and help guide them in any way, especially to make them huge stars and create a future for them," Hogan said. "People might be surprised, but wrestling is wrestling, brother."

Hogan first became champion in what was then the World Wrestling Federation in 1984, and pro wrestling took off from there. His popularity helped lead to the creation of the annual WrestleMania event in 1985, when he teamed up with Mr. T to beat "Rowdy" Roddy Piper and "Mr. Wonderful" Paul Orndorff in the main event.

He slammed and beat Andre the Giant at WrestleMania III in 1987, and the WWF gained momentum. His feud with the late "Macho Man" Randy Savage perhaps his greatest rival carried pro wrestling even further.

Hogan was a central figure in what is known as the Monday Night Wars. The WWE and World Championship Wrestling were battling for ratings supremacy in 1996.

Hogan tilted things in WCW's favor with the birth

of the Hollywood Hogan character and the formation of the New World Order, a villainous stable that put WCW ahead in the ratings.

He returned to the WWE in 2002 and became a champion again. His match with The Rock at WrestleMania X8, a loss during which fans cheered for his "bad guy" character, was seen as a passing of the torch.

Hogan was perhaps as well known for his larger-than-life personality as he was his in-ring exploits. He was beloved for his "promos" hype sessions he used to draw fans into matches. He often would play off his interviewer, "Mean" Gene Okerlund, starting his interviews off with, "Well, lemme tell ya something, Mean Gene!"

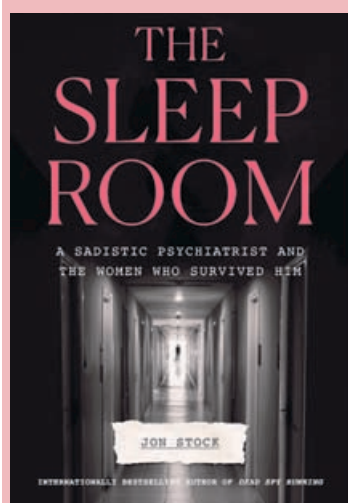
He crossed over into movies and television as well. He was Thunderlips in the movie "Rocky III" in 1982.

In 2016, a Florida jury awarded Hogan \$115 million in a lawsuit against Gawker Media and then added \$25 million in punitive damages.

Hogan sued after Gawker in 2012 posted a video of him having sex with his former best friend's wife. He contended the post violated his privacy.

Hogan smiled and wore black throughout the three-week trial.

"Everywhere I show up, people treat me like I'm still the champ," he said of the support from fans. □



This image released by Abrams Books shows "The Sleep Room" by Jon Stock. (Abrams Books via Associated Press)

Book Review: 'The Sleep Room' is the harrowing story of psychiatric care in the 1960s

By **FERNANDA FIGUEROA**
Associated Press

In the 1960s, a hospital in London held a ward full of women who suffered from a range of mental disorders. The women in this "sleep room" were subjected to various medical procedures, including electroconvulsive therapy, or ECT, and, at times, a lobotomy, without their consent.

In "The Sleep Room: A Sadistic Psychiatrist and the Women Who Survived Him," Jon Stock tells the harrowing history of the British doctor who sub-

jected them to medical abuse and gives voice to those who survived him.

With interwoven firsthand testimony from surviving patients and rigorous research, Stock provides a haunting account of what the psychiatrist did to his patients without their knowledge.

Throughout the book Stock also works to hold the medical establishment accountable for the neglect that occurred, but at times can simplify the complexities of psychiatric

care during the '60s that most likely led to the abuse endured by many patients.

While the switching between patient stories, history and research can create some confusion for the reader, the patient testimonies allows Stock to deliver an emotionally powerful narrative that is equally as disturbing. Written with nuance and tact, the "The Sleep Room" is a chilling exposé into psychiatric care that will resonate deeply with readers and, especially, true crime fans. □

Opportunity in Washington helped Mystics rookies Citron and Iriafen become WNBA All-Stars

By NOAH TRISTER
AP Sports Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — When Sonia Citron and Kiki Iriafen were drafted by a rebuilding Washington team, it was clear they'd have a chance to make a quick impact.

It turned out to be a historic one.

Citron and Iriafen were both WNBA All-Stars last weekend, becoming the first pair of rookie teammates to achieve that since 1999.

Their inclusion was an acknowledgement of how quickly they've established themselves in the league and the way they've helped improve the Mystics' outlook.

"From the beginning, Slim (guard Brittney Sykes) told me like, 'You're not a rookie. We drafted you for a reason, we drafted Kiki for a reason, so you guys just go out and do what you do,'" Citron said.

That's not something rookies even first-round picks like Citron and Iriafen can



Washington Mystics' Kiki Iriafen shoots during the first half of a WNBA All-Star basketball game against Team Collier, Saturday, July 19, 2025, in Indianapolis.

Associated Press

take for granted. The WNBA is a famously tough league to break into. For every immediate rookie star like Paige Bueckers, there's another high pick facing a slower adjustment timeline. Bueckers, Citron and Iriafen were all All-Stars, the first

time three rookies made it since 2011. But they're the only rookies averaging over 10 points per game this year.

Some of that comes down to opportunity. After finishing 14-26 last year, Washington brought in Jamila

Wideman as its general manager and Sydney Johnson as its coach. Then the Mystics took Citron out of Notre Dame with the third pick in the draft and Iriafen out of Southern California with the next pick. Having both become All-

Stars was pretty much the best-case scenario.

Especially since both had a chance to go to Indiana and spend time with some of the game's biggest stars. "I think there's another couple of jumps that they're looking to take, and I think they were rubbing elbows with some of those players that they aspire to be like, to outperform," Johnson said.

The 6-foot-3 Iriafen scored 17 points in the game and Citron, a 6-1 guard, added 11. Citron also took part in the 3-point contest and the winner, Sabrina Ionescu, said she'd give half her winnings to the Washington rookie.

Johnson said observing how players like Ionescu go about their business is valuable.

"Sabrina put on a show with the 3-point contest. Sonia knows how good of a shooter she is Sonia is and then you look, and there's like a whole other level there with Sabrina," Johnson said. □

Pogačar withstands Vingegaard's attacks to keep yellow jersey after Tour's monster mountain stage

COURCHEVEL, France (AP)

— Ben O'Connor won Thursday's monster Alpine stage to the ski resort of Courchevel as three-time Tour de France champion Tadej Pogačar responded to attacks from archrival Jonas Vingegaard and dropped him to cement his grip on the yellow jersey.

With just three stages left before the race ends in Paris, Pogačar looks poised to retain his title, with a comfortable lead of more than four minutes over Vingegaard, a two-time champion.

Stage 18 featured three extremely difficult ascents, including the 26.4-kilometer (16.5-mile) daunting climb of the Col de La Loze up to the finish. At 2,304 meters of altitude, La Loze is the highest summit in this year's Tour.

Two years ago, Vingegaard

dropped Pogačar on that mountain on his way to his second Tour title but could not deal a decisive blow this time.

Riding behind O'Connor, Vingegaard and Pogačar closely watched each other in the final climb, surrounded by buoyant fans braving the cold temperature and the fog. Vingegaard attacked his Slovenian rival but Pogačar responded with ease. Vingegaard and his Visma-Lease a Bike teammates had also tried to hurt the defending champion earlier in the day in the Col de La Madeleine, but their efforts left Pogačar unfazed. The reigning world champion, who rides for UAE Team Emirates-XRG, never panicked and accelerated near the end to drop Vingegaard in the last 500 meters and increase his

overall lead.

Pogačar crossed the finish line 1 minute and 45 seconds behind O'Connor. Vingegaard completed the stage podium, 1:54 off the pace.

"I was a bit scared of this stage, but it turned out

to be a beautiful day," Pogačar said. "This side of the Col de La Loze is easier than the one we did in 2023 that was much worse. Whenever we climb that side again, I'll definitely go for the win."

Ahead of Friday's final

mountain stage to La Plagne, Vingegaard lags 4:26 behind Pogačar, with Florian Lipowitz in third place, 11:01 back.

It was O'Connor's second stage win at the Tour, four years after his victory in Tignes. The team Jayco Al-Ula leader dropped his last breakaway companion, Einer Rubio, with 16 kilometers to go and then held off the return of the main contenders. "It's special to do it again here in the Tour de France," O'Connor said. "The last time in Tignes was a complete shock but this time I got to enjoy much more. I had a super day today, I was finally back to being me after struggling for the past 17 days. My knee is absolutely screwed now, it's really painful. It's lingering there and it's not going to stop until the end of the race." □



Australia's Ben O'Connor crosses the finish line to win the eighteenth stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 171.5 kilometers (106.6 miles) with start in Vif and finish in Courchevel Col de la Loze, France, Thursday, July 24, 2025.

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McIntosh goes for 5 individual golds at world championships with Los Angeles Olympics in sight

By **STEPHEN WADE**
AP Sports Writer

Summer McIntosh won three individual gold medals a year ago at the Olympics, the star in the Paris pool alongside France's Léon Marchand. Apparently unsatisfied with three, she'll go for five gold medals starting Sunday at the world swimming championships in Singapore. Call it a trial run for the Los Angeles Olympics in 2028.

The worlds is the highest profile swim meet since last year's Olympics, a showcase for newcomers as well as veterans who hope to stick around until Los Angeles.

McIntosh will be very busy during the eight days in the pool, packing her schedule with five individual events. She'll contend with prelims in some events, and she'll also add relays.

"This means 14 or 15 races she could swim in eight days, demanding races," Canada's head coach Iain McDonald



Summer McIntosh of Canada competes during the Women's 400m Medley Heats on day five of the World Short Course Swimming Championships in Budapest, Hungary, on Dec. 14, 2024.

Associated Press

told The Associated Press. "It's a very challenging schedule she's set for herself."

The 18-year-old Canadian set three world records in five days in June at the national trials. She broke her own 400-meter individual medley mark, dropping it to 4 minutes, 23.65 seconds, and set the 200 IM record (2:05.70)

and the 400 freestyle record (3:54.18).

She was also a mere half-second behind the 200 butterfly record, which has stood since 2009, and just off the 800 freestyle record set last month by American Katie Ledecky.

"She's such a versatile athlete, it's kind of tough to nail

what her best events are," McDonald said. "She's pretty good right across the spectrum."

Opening day

McIntosh will be the focus on Day 1 of the pool events in Singapore. She swims the 400 freestyle final, and comes back about 30 minutes later for a semifinal of the 200 IM. Despite holding the world record in the 400 free, she's never won gold in the event at the Olympics or worlds. This time she's ready, and credits coach Fred Vernoux.

"I'm super pumped for the 400 freestyle and I'm really excited to see how I manage doing the double," McIntosh told Canadian broadcaster the CBC.

McIntosh said Vernoux has boosted her endurance, pointing more to distance events. "It's true that I haven't been able to do it on world stage yet," she said of the 400. "I think going into past big meets I haven't had the

confidence in my training and my freestyle in general — technique-wise and endurance-wise — that I have now." Ariarne Titmus was the gold medalist in Paris with silver for McIntosh, but the Australian swimmer is taking a year off. It's Titmus's record that McIntosh just broke. Ledecky, the bronze medalist in Paris, appears to be McIntosh's chief rival.

McIntosh will also face Ledecky in the 800, which might be the only race where McIntosh is not favored. It's probably 50-50, and it might be the biggest race of the championships.

Ledecky set the world record this year of 8:04.12, and McIntosh is right behind, having clocked 8:05.07.

"I think she loves it (the challenge)," Greg Meehan, the U.S. team director, said of Ledecky. "There are always threats coming at you because you've set yourself to be the gold standard." □